

Jul 25th, 3:05 PM - 3:25 PM

Flashlight: Using Bizup's BEAM to Illuminate the Rhetoric of Research

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Kate Rubick, "Flashlight: Using Bizup's BEAM to Illuminate the Rhetoric of Research" (July 25, 2014). *Library Instruction West 2014*. Paper 10.

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A black flashlight is positioned diagonally across the frame, pointing towards the bottom left. The flashlight has a textured body and a clear lens at the front. The background is a light, slightly mottled surface.

FLASHLIGHT

USING BIZUP'S BEAM TO ILLUMINATE THE RHETORIC OF RESEARCH

THE CLASSIC QUESTION

WHAT IS A PRIMARY SOURCE?



RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

1. Three academic books
2. Five peer reviewed journal articles
3. no more than two websites
4. no Wikipedia!



INFORMATION SOURCES AS CONTAINERS



ACADEMIC = NUTRITIOUS

A BIGGER ISSUE

WHAT DO WRITERS DO WITH SOURCES?





JOSEPH BIZUP

BIZUP'S BEAM

Background

- Present Information, Establish Facts

Exhibit

- Explicate, Interpret, Analyze

Argument

- Affirm, Dispute, Refine, Extend

Method

- Critical lens; key terms, theory, style, perspective, discourse



KUNDAI CHIRINDO

PARTNER IN BEAM



OK, I GUESS I AM DOING THIS.

LEGITIMIZING WIKIPEDIA

How US national newspapers frame and use the online encyclopedia in their coverage

Marcus Messner and Jeff South

Within only a few years, the collaborative online encyclopedia Wikipedia has become one of the most popular websites in the world. At the same time, Wikipedia has become the subject of much controversy because of inaccuracies and hoaxes found in some of its entries. Journalists, therefore, have remained skeptical about the reliability and accuracy of Wikipedia's information, despite the fact that research has consistently shown an overall high level of accuracy compared to traditional encyclopedias. This study analyzed the framing of Wikipedia and its use as a news source by US national newspapers over an eight-year period. A content analysis of 1486 references in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Christian Science Monitor, and USA Today found that Wikipedia is framed predominantly as a source that it is increasingly being used as a source. By framing Wikipedia as a source, the newspapers confirm the neutral and accurate nature of the encyclopedia. The study also found that the newspapers use Wikipedia to influence their news coverage, framing; journalism; news sources; newspapers; Wikipedia

STEP 1

SELECT ARTICLE

STEP 2

FLAG TEXT

Previous research has not attempted to systematically quantify and evaluate the use of Wikipedia as a news source on a broader scale. The goal of this study, therefore, was to determine the framing of Wikipedia and the use of it as a news source. A content analysis of national newspapers—*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and *The Christian Science Monitor*—was conducted to explore how the online encyclopedia is covered, and how it is used as a news source. The results of this study lead to a better understanding of whether Wikipedia is still greeted with skepticism or whether it has been accepted by the newspapers as a credible source of information. The framing and use by newspapers also has agenda-setting implications on the public's view on Wikipedia, as certain frames of media coverage and news sources have the potential to shape public opinion. Overall, this study helps to evaluate the level of legitimization for Wikipedia.

Framing of Wikipedia

McCombs (2005) defined five stages of agenda-setting theory: (1) issue agenda-setting, (2) attribute agenda-setting, (3) psychology of agenda-setting effects, (4) sources of the media agenda, and (5) consequences of agenda-setting. This study explores two of these areas: how attributes in media coverage frame the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, and how the media use it as a source.

According to Gamson (1989), framing theory helps to analyze how certain attributes of information are emphasized over others. It is important to understand how the media frame an issue when there are a variety of options to present the information. The selection of specific facts and their interpretation have the potential to shape public opinion and influence the public's agenda (Mahon and Wartick, 2003). When journalists choose a frame for an issue, they make a consequential decision that will influence the story, but also its reader's perception of the issue (McCombs and Shaw, 1993). Wanta et al. (2004) stressed that the public learns the importance of an issue based on the amount of

STEP 3

MARCUS MESSNER AND JEFF SOUTH

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CLASS OUTLINE

1. Introduce library services for RHMS
2. Discussion of Bizup article
3. Application of BEAM

APPLICATION OF BEAM

1. Distribute flagged articles
2. Student volunteer reads abstract
3. Independent analysis
4. Groups of three discuss
5. Groups report out

HOW IT WENT

- Students engaged
- Students reticent
- Aha moment



OUTCOMES

- 19 research consultations
- Quality of papers increased
- A professor converted
- An effective inroads established

REFLECTION

A blue car's side-view mirror is the central focus, reflecting a dusty road that winds through a mountainous landscape. The reflection shows a hazy, sunlit scene with mountains in the distance and a road that curves into the distance. The car's body is visible in the foreground, and the background is a blurred, rocky terrain.

- BEAM for reading AND writing
- BEAM for practicing rhetorical criticism
- Application for other disciplines?

OTHER LIBRARIES USING BEAM

Bard High School Early College - Manhattan
Brookdale Community College
California State University Maritime
The George Washington University
High Point University
Illinois Wesleyan University
St. Olaf College
Portland State University
University of Baltimore
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
Westminster College
Worcester State University

IMAGE SOURCES

Self portrait of Joseph Bizup, used with permission.

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Portrait of Kundai Chirindo by Kate Rubick.

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QUESTIONS?

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